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SMU marks opening of new Academic Year with \$5 million gift from Mr Kuok Khoon Ean

Gift will support new scholarships and student programme to nurture leaders of tomorrow



Singapore, 18 August 2017 (Friday) – Consistent with Singapore Management University (SMU)’s penchant for change, the University has re-invented the previous format of holding a Convocation ceremony to welcome its freshmen at the start of each academic year. This year, SMU celebrated the opening of its new Academic Year 2017-18 with multiple events throughout the day on SMU campus for freshmen, senior and graduate students, as well as international exchange students.

Starting with freshmen being welcomed at their individual schools, followed by the annual mega co-curricular activities fair VIVACE at the refreshed Campus Green and Concourse which created much buzz and excitement around the campus, the Academic Year Opening Day entered its climax with the Academic Year Opening Ceremony in the evening at the new School of Law Building attended by SMU senior management, faculty, staff, donors, freshmen and student leaders. They were treated to a sit-down dinner a la the Open Cambridge dinner, which was

interspersed with student performances, including SMU's tribute song to commemorate 50 years of National Service (NS50) "I Get You" produced by SMU's in-house creative head Jimmy Ye in collaboration with other local artistes.



[SMU Pro-Chancellor Mr Lim Chee Onn (centre), accompanied by SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping (second from right) and SMU's senior management, toured the annual mega co-curricular activities fair VIVACE at the refreshed Campus Green.]



[SMU Pro-Chancellor Mr Lim Chee Onn and SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping with members of SMU Samba Masala at the annual mega co-curricular activities fair VIVACE.]

Mr Kuok Khoon Ean, Chairman of Kuok (Singapore) Limited, was the Guest-of-Honour at the Ceremony. SMU Pro-Chancellor Mr Lim Chee Onn, SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping and SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer were also present to grace the event.



[SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping with Guest-of-Honour Mr Kuok Khoon Ean, Chairman of Kuok (Singapore) Limited, at the sit-down dinner a la the Open Cambridge dinner at the SMU Academic Year Opening Ceremony.]



[SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping (second from left) interacting with Mr Kuok Meng Wei (second from right), son of Mr Kuok Khoon Ean (extreme left), and Ms Alexandra Eu (extreme right), fiancée of Meng Wei.]

Starting 21 August, the university's 18th cohort of 2030 freshmen will pursue degree programmes in accountancy, business management, economics, information systems, law and social sciences. They will also have the opportunity to take up new offerings which are introduced for the first time in the forthcoming academic year.

SMU International Scholarships and SMU Pathfinders Programme

Mr Kuok Khoon Ean, a member of SMU's first Board of Trustees, has made an endowed contribution of \$5 million to support the SMU International Scholarships and SMU Pathfinders Programme.



[SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping presenting a token of appreciation to Guest-of-Honour Mr Kuok Khoon Ean, Chairman of Kuok (Singapore) Limited, in appreciation of his \$5 million gift to SMU International Scholarships and SMU Pathfinders Programme.]

SMU International Scholarships

Commencing in academic year 2017/18, two undergraduate non-bonded Scholarships will be awarded per academic year and in perpetuity to incoming SMU freshman from any degree programme. Applicants must have demonstrated financial need. The objectives of the Scholarships are to motivate outstanding undergraduates from the emerging economies of South and Southeast Asia at SMU to achieve academic excellence and to accord appropriate recognition to the recipients of the Scholarships for their accomplishments. Each Scholarship shall be valid for four academic years provided that the student maintains good academic results and continues to demonstrate high standards of personal conduct and remains active in community service and co-curricular activities.

SMU Pathfinders Programme

The SMU Pathfinders Programme seeks to prepare students to be their best for others, as ethical and exemplary members of their respective teams, communities, and fields. The Programme is anchored on the principles of SMU LifeLessons - a co-curricular learning framework that was launched in 2013, to nurture our students to become self-directed learners, trusted leaders, and responsible global citizens.

Students are first exposed to SMU LifeLessons during their freshmen orientation, and encouraged to progressively engage in activities and projects that align to their academic interests, professional aspirations, values, and life's purpose. The new SMU Pathfinders Programme serves to provide a platform for student leaders to engage in deeper reflective enquiry and conversations that would help them synthesise and make sense of what they have learned from their various co-curricular experiences.

Students seeking leadership, helping or advising positions in their chosen CCA groups will have the opportunity to register for the programme as part of their existing respective training pathways. This work is but a step towards achieving SMU's Vision 2025, which aims to provide students with a transformative education that blends content knowledge and skills to effect positive change in the world.

Mr Kuok said, "Whilst the hardware is important, it is the quality of the software that shapes the outcome. The SMU Pathfinders Programme provides a framework and foundation for future leaders to uncover their own values, chart their own paths and discover their own purpose." Emphasising that learning is a lifelong journey, Mr Kuok urged SMU students to "pursue each opportunity with vigour, embrace every experience graciously, give wholeheartedly and live a life fulfilled."

SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping said, "I would like to express our gratitude to Mr Kuok for his donation of \$5 million for SMU Pathfinders Programme and SMU International Scholarships. Mr Kuok has a vision of developing the next generation of youth leaders who not only have the resilience and tenacity to lead, but who are also mindful of the values that shape those decisions and actions.

"This aligns with SMU's own Vision 2025 as we seek to provide a transformative education that will encourage our students to go beyond discovering their own values, paths and purpose and go on to guide, transform and inspire others to discover theirs."



[Mr and Mrs Kuok Khoon Ean with recipients of SMU International Scholarships Ms Vu Le Ngoc Tram (second from left) from Lee Kong Chian School of Business and Ms May Myo Myint Myat (second from right) from School of Information Systems.]



[Mr Kuok Khoon Ean addressing the gathering at the Academic Year Opening post-dinner cocktail.]

Universities of the 21st century

In his speech, SMU President Professor Arnoud De Meyer cited the abundance of data and information, the imperative of sustainability, the rising demand for creative professionals in Asia, and the new globalisation as the drivers for change in education.

He noted that beyond disciplinary knowledge, graduates will have to be proficient in design thinking, critical thinking and creativity, be resilient, and possess the ability to work across teams and experiences.

Prof De Meyer also highlighted seven potential new trends that would shape the 21st -century university and how SMU is responding to these trends. One of the trends he identified is that unlimited data access is changing teaching and research. In this regard, SMU has embarked on large-scale research programmes on Living Analytics and its applications. It has also brought analytics as courses to most of the schools in SMU with the aim of enabling its students to learn how to use data and how to think “together with machines”.

Another trend Prof De Meyer mentioned is that learning will be life-long. Therefore, it is important that one learns how to learn. It is with this in mind that SMU-X was launched three years ago to enable experiential learning where SMU students develop their skills and knowledge by solving real-world problems. SMU also caters to the learning needs of adults through its multiple postgraduate programmes, executive development programmes and its lifelong learning unit - SMU Academy which was launched in April this year.

Please refer to the full speech for more details.

New curriculum and courses commencing in AY2017

1. Revised curriculum by School of Information Systems

SMU's School of Information Systems will roll out a revised curriculum which emphasises creating innovative computing and information solutions for business and society. During the first two years of study, the focus is on creating business and social value by developing IT solutions using innovation methods and emerging technologies. New courses such as Information Systems and Innovations, and Business Process Analysis and Solutioning will prepare SIS graduates to translate consumer, enterprise, government and social requirements into innovative IT enabled solutions.

From their third year of study, students will specialise in career tracks based on their aspirations. Building on the skills and knowledge they acquired in the first two years, students will focus on deepening their Consultant & Business Analyst and/or Advanced Technical knowledge during their final two years comprising of these specialisation tracks: Financial Technology, Business Analytics, Digital Business Solutioning, Cybersecurity, Software Development, and Artificial Intelligence.

2. Smart City Management & Technology Major by School of Information Systems

The inaugural class of 46 students will commence their 4-year interdisciplinary major offered by the School of Information Systems in collaboration with the School of Social Sciences during this academic year. The new major aims to nurture graduates who are able to innovate solutions to urbanisation challenges through application of interdisciplinary knowledge across technology, social sciences and management.

Students will be given experiential learning opportunities to apply the solutions in state-of-the-art smart city initiatives through participation in internships and real-life projects in a selected domain: Mobility, Public Services, Business & Economy, Health & Enabled-Ageing, Home & Environment.

The new major will prepare students for a wide variety of job roles, including IT or management consultants for smart systems, sustainable solutions designer, urban planners, as well as smart systems designer and developer.

3. New courses by other SMU Schools

Lee Kong Chian School of Business (LKCSB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finance Analytics Track, offered under LKCSB Finance Major• Marketing Analytics Track, offered under LKCSB Marketing Major• Retail and Services Management Track, offered under LKCSB Marketing Major• Operations Analytics Track, offered under LKCSB Operations Management Major• Financial Innovation• Structured Products Sales and Trading• Business Study Mission to New Zealand
School of Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic Dynamics• Strategic Thinking
School of Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deal-making and Dispute Resolution: Negotiation in an Age of Disruption

School of Social Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and Audiences • Politics of the Two Koreas • International Relations of East Asia • Sociology Study Mission to Kashgar and Lahore • Psychology of Close Relationships
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4. New SMU-X Courses

Every SMU-X course combines academic with experiential learning through the heavy use of projects to challenge and inspire our students to use their disciplinary knowledge and skills in tackling multi-disciplinary, real issues faced by the partner organisations in the private, public and NGO sectors. In the Academic Year 2017/2018, at least 25 SMU-X modules will be on offer and about 2,000 students will partner with organisations across all sectors in tackling real-world issues.

The following **five new SMU-X courses** will be introduced in AY2017/2018.

School of Accountancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Sustainability • Accounting Study Mission to Israel
School of Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development in Asia
School of Social Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Union Politics • Capstone Seminar: Population Ageing and Communities in Singapore

Inaugural batch of Global Impact Scholars

Among the freshmen joining SMU this year is the **inaugural batch of 40 Global Impact Scholars**. The new, premier scholarship programme, which was **25 times over-subscribed**, is dedicated to nurturing a new generation of Singaporean leaders with the global perspective, skills and commitment to solve complex problems and make strong societal impact and contributions.

The scholarship comprises a specially designed Scholars' Core curriculum that has a strong infusion of experiential learning through bespoke SMU-X modules, multiple forms of overseas exposure and strong leadership development opportunities.

The Global Impact Scholarship is also distinct in that it covers undergraduate and postgraduate education. Global Impact Scholars can choose to do either an Integrated Bachelor and Master degree in four years*, or pursue a Sequential Master degree after completing their undergraduate studies. In the latter case, they also have the option of pursuing their postgraduate studies after gaining a few years of experience in the workplace.

**with the exception of law students, who are expected to complete the Integrated Bachelor and Master degree in five years.*

New facilities and buildings

SMU \$20m campus development project just completed in May 2017

SMU is the only university in Singapore and among very few in the world with a campus in the heart of the city. SMU's city campus provides a natural focal point and central gathering space for students, faculty as well as the public.

In May 2015, SMU announced a \$20 million two-year campus development project which will not only add new learning, teaching and group study spaces, and sports facilities, to its current campus in the city but also transform the landscape of the Civic District by injecting energy and activities to the SMU Campus Green.

Key features which have been added to the SMU city campus include: study lounges, new seminar rooms and flexible-configuration classrooms of various sizes; an expanded, three-storey Fitness Centre; and a new Amphitheatre on Campus Green which received a major makeover with the installation of artificial turf to render the sprawling outdoor space much more conducive and inviting for student related activities, informal gatherings and various events. Indeed, this space will be a focal point of student and community-engagement activities.

Financial assistance and scholarships

SMU practises a 'needs-blind' admission policy where no deserving student will be deprived of an education because of financial hardship. Grants, bursaries, loans and scholarships are available for needy students, so that they can focus on their studies and enjoy an enriching educational journey at SMU. In FY2017, over \$6 million in financial aid to students have been made available, combining university resources as well as donor-supported schemes. Students can get access to the financial aid via the SMU Financial Grant, SMU Bursary, SMU Access, Work Study Grant, SMU Education Loan, SMU Student Computer Loan, and donor-supported bursaries, study awards and needs-based scholarships.

With 200 scholarships that freshmen can apply for, one in 10 freshmen of the new intake will stand a chance to be awarded a scholarship by the University. Some of the scholarships give preference to students with financial needs, and all of them are bond-free.

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